Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims shall replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a user with a game of chance, the method comprising the steps of:

    receiving electronic signals from a user system representing search

        parameters descriptive of a product;

    retrieving at least one product information from at least one database storing

        independent third-party retail vendor product information;

    transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing the retrieved

        product information and associated prices;

    automatically providing the user with an option to play a game to win a selected

        product from said product information without the user first

        making any payment or requesting the option;

    electronically calculating a dynamic probability of ~~wining~~ winning the selected

        product by the user based on one or more factors selected from a group

        consisting of: the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of

        all products available, a current prize budget, a ratio of the current prize

        budget to a total amount of funds received and the user's behavior during a

        user session:

    electronically generating ~~a pseudo-random outcome~~ a trial outcome of an event

        trial, the probability of the event trial generating a winning trial outcome

        corresponding to the calculated probability of winning;

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generating an outcome indicator independent of, and differently distributed from, the trial outcome;

displaying the outcome indicator to the user; and

in response to a winning ~~pseudo-random~~ trial outcome, purchasing the selected product for the user from the independent third-party retail vendor at no cost to the user.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the probability of winning on successive plays of the game increases with the value derived from the user's interaction with the system.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~pseudo-random outcome is indicated by displaying a~~ display comprises a user-chosen number and a comparison number, such that a winning outcome is indicated by displaying a comparison number that matches the user-chosen number, and a losing outcome is indicated by displaying a comparison number that does not match the user-chosen number.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3, wherein an increased probability of winning on successive plays of the game is indicated by displaying a comparison number having at least one digit matching the corresponding at least one digit of the user-selected number.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the probability of winning is

different than one divided by ten raised to the power of the number of digits in the comparison number.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, comprising providing the user with an opportunity to increase the chances of winning by performing a task for which a third party provides compensation to the provider of the game of chance.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, comprising calculating a probability of winning based on at least a current budget.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on a total number of game players.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on:

$$P = \frac{P_a * P_t * P_m}{N} + P_u$$

where:

P_a is a probability factor that varies with the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available;

P_t is a probability factor that varies with a current prize budget;

P_m is a probability factor that varies with a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds received;

P_u is probability factor that varies with the user's behavior during a user session;

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and

N is a number of current users.

10.   (Currently Amended) A method of providing a user with a game of chance, the method comprising:

receiving electronic signals from a user system representing at least one search parameter descriptive of a product;

retrieving at least one product information from at least one database storing independent third-party retail vendor product information;

transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing at a least one product, a price of the product and [[a]] the independent third-party retail vendor of the product;

automatically transmitting electronic signals representing at least a first option for the user to play a game to win the product without the user first making any payment or requesting the first option, and a second option to purchase the product;

if the user chooses to play the game:

electronically calculating a dynamic probability of winning the product by the user based on one or more factors selected from a group consisting of: the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available, a current prize budget, a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds received and the user's behavior during a user session;

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electronically generating ~~a pseudo-random outcome~~ a trial outcome, the

probability of the trial outcome generating a winning trial outcome

corresponding to the calculated probability of winning;

generating an outcome indicator independent of, and differently

distributed from, the trial outcome;

displaying the outcome indicator to the user; and

in response to a winning ~~pseudo-random~~ trial outcome, purchasing the product for

the user from the independent third-party retail vendor at no cost to the

user; and

if the user chooses to purchase the product instead of playing the game:

directing the user to a web site which sells the product.

11.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, comprising providing the user with an

opportunity to increase the chances of winning on successive plays of the game by

performing a task for which a third party provides compensation to the provider of the

game of chance.

12.   (Canceled).

13.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, comprising calculating a probability P of

winning based on a total number of game players.

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14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on:

$$P = \frac{P_a * P_t * P_m}{N} + P_u$$

where:

Pa is a probability factor that varies with the cost of the selected product in

relation to the total cost of all products available;

Pt is a probability factor that varies with a current prize budget;

Pm is a probability factor that varies with a ratio of the current prize budget to a

total amount of funds received;

Pu is probability factor that varies with the user's behavior during a user session;

and

N is a number of current users.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a user with a game of chance, the method comprising:

receiving electronic signals from a user system representing at least one search

parameter descriptive of a product;

retrieving at least one product information from at least one database storing

independent third-party retail vendor product information;

transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing a plurality of

different independent third-party retail vendors and associated prices

charged by each of said different independent third-party retail vendors for

products identified in response to said at least one search parameter;

automatically transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing an

option to play a game to win a selected one of said products without the

user first making any payment or requesting the option: and

if the user chooses to play the game:

electronically calculating a dynamic probability of winning said selected one

product by the user based on one or more factors selected from a group

consisting of: the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of

all products available, a current prize budget, a ratio of the current prize

budget to a total amount of funds received and the user's behavior during a

user session;

electronically generating a ~~pseudo-random outcome~~ a trial outcome, the

probability of the trial outcome generating a winning trial outcome

corresponding to the calculated probability of winning;

generating an outcome indicator independent of, and differently distributed from,

the trial outcome:

displaying the outcome indicator to the user: and

in response to a winning ~~pseudo-random~~ trial outcome, purchasing said selected

one product from a corresponding independent third-party retail vendor

for the user at no cost to the user.

16.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15, comprising providing the user with an

opportunity to increase the chances of winning by performing a task for which a third

party provides compensation to the provider of the game of chance.

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17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on a total number of game players.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, comprising calculating a probability P of winning based on:

$$P = \frac{P_a * P_t * P_m}{N} + P_u$$

where:

Pa is a probability factor that varies with the cost of the selected product in relation
   to the total cost of all products available;

Pt is a probability factor that varies with a current prize budget;

Pm is a probability factor that varies with a ratio of the current prize budget to a
   total amount of funds received;

Pu is probability factor that varies with the user's behavior during a user session;
   and

N is a number of current users.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the electronic signals representing the associated prices charged by each of said different dealers, represent the prices charged on said each of said different dealers' own web sites.

21. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a user with a game of chance, the method comprising:

receiving electronic signals from a user system representing at least one search parameter descriptive of a product;

searching for products matching said at least one search parameter;

transmitting electronic signals to the user system representing a plurality of independent third-party retail vendors and associated prices charged by each of said independent third-party retail vendors for products identified in response to said at least one search parameter, each of the products identified being offered for sale on a corresponding web site of each independent third-party retail vendor;

automatically transmitting electronic signals to the user representing an option to play a game to win a selected one of said products without the user first making any payment or requesting the option; and

if the user chooses to play the game:

electronically calculating a dynamic probability of winning said selected one product by the user based on one or more factors selected from a group consisting of: the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available, a current prize budget, a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds received and the user's behavior during a user session;

electronically generating a pseudo-random outcome having a probability trial

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outcome, the probability of the trial outcome generating a winning trial outcome corresponding to the calculated probability of winning;

generating an outcome indicator independent of, and differently distributed from, the trial outcome;

displaying the outcome indicator to the user; and

in response to a winning pseudo-random trial outcome, purchasing said selected one product from a corresponding independent third-party retail vendor for the user at no cost to the user.

22.   (Currently Amended) A method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service by playing a game of chance without buying the product or service and without paying a fee to play, comprising the steps of:

enabling the user to submit a search query associated with a type of product or service;

conducting a search in a database for [[a]] an independent third-party retail vendor product or service that satisfies the search query;

automatically presenting a result of the search to the user, including at least one product or service offered for sale by said the independent third-party retail vendor retrieved from the database, along with an option to play the game;

enabling the user to select the product or service that he wants to win;

dynamically determining the user's chance of winning the selected product or

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service based on one or more factors selected from a group consisting of: the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available, a current prize budget, a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds received and the user's behavior during a user session;

generating ~~an~~ a trial outcome for each play of the game ~~that~~ wherein the probability of the trial outcome generating a winning trial outcome corresponds to the user's chance of winning;

generating an outcome indicator independent of, and differently distributed from, the trial outcome; and

displaying the outcome indicator ~~of the game~~ to the user

23.   (Currently Amended) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 22 further comprising the step of purchasing the selected product or service for the user, and at no cost to the user, if the outcome for the play of the game is a win.

24.   (Previously Presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 22 further comprising the step of enabling the user to increase the chance of winning the selected product or service through repeated plays of the game.

25.   (Previously Presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product

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or service of claim 22 wherein the step of determining the user's chance of winning the selected product or service is a function of at least one of a cost of the product or service, a number of other users playing to win the product or service concurrently, a current prize budget and an amount of funds received from an advertising sponsor.

26. (Previously Presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 25 wherein the advertising sponsor provides funds for the purchase of the selected product or service to a game provider as a payment for a display of an advertisement to the user during each play of the game.

27. (Previously Presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 25 wherein the step of determining the user's chance of winning the selected product or service is a function of the user's behavior during repeated plays of the game.

28. (Currently Amended) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 26 wherein the user's repeated plays of the game generates revenue from the advertising sponsor for ~~paid to~~ a game provider which increases the user's chance of winning the selected product or service.

29. (Previously Presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 22 wherein the game of chance comprises displaying a number selected by the user along with the number generated to represent the outcome for each

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play of the game.

30.   (Previously Presented) The method for providing a user an opportunity to win a product or service of claim 29 wherein the user can increase the probability of winning the product or service by participating in an online survey for an advertising sponsor.

31.   (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising collecting a database of independent third party retail vendor product information prior to receiving the search parameters from the user.

32.   (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 whereby transmitting electronic signal as representing product info and said automatically providing an option to play is by transmitting a webpage containing at least a link to a webpage of the independent third party retail vendor and a link to initiate playing to win the same product.

33.   (Currently Amended) A method for increasing user traffic to a search engine website, comprising:

receiving a search query from a user system interacting with a search webpage of the website, the search query defining a desired product for the user; and

transmitting a results webpage to the user system, the results page including at least one link for redirection to [[a]] an independent third party vendor website where the user system can interact with at least one webpage to purchase a corresponding product and further including in the same webpage a play link corresponding to

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~~said~~ the independent third party vendor link for redirection to a webpage which allows the user to play a game of chance to win the product <u>at no cost to the user, the link</u> corresponding to the <u>independent</u> third party website redirection link.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 33, wherein said play link webpage is provided by the search engine website and wherein the search engine website calculates the outcome of the game of chance for a user system selecting to play to win the product and further wherein if the user outcome is favorable the search engine website facilitating the purchase of the product from the <u>independent</u> third party vendor corresponding to the <u>independent</u> third party website redirection link.

35. (Currently Amended) A method for increasing user traffic to a search website, comprising:

providing a search webpage containing a search interface for a user to submit a search query for a product;

receiving a search query from a user employing said search webpage;

searching <u>independent</u> third party websites by reference to said query;

retrieving product information and corresponding price from ~~said~~ <u>the independent</u> third party websites for at least one products satisfying said query;

providing a game of chance in response to a user selection of the link to win the product;

and purchasing the product from the <u>independent</u> third party for the user response to a favorable outcome in said game;

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transmitting at least one results webpage to the user, the results webpage including at
least one link for the product information, a corresponding price, a link to the
independent third party website, and a link to win the product;

providing a game of chance in response to a user selection of the link to win the product,
wherein the probability of winning the product by the user is dynamically
calculated based on one or more factors selected from a group consisting of: the
cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available, a
current prize budget, a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds
received and the user's behavior during a user session;

generating an outcome indicator independent of, and differently distributed from,
the probability of winning;

displaying the outcome indicator to the user; and

purchasing the product from the independent third party for the user in response to a
favorable outcome in said game and providing said product to the user at no cost
to the user.

36.   (Currently Amended) A product search website executing on a server storing a plurality
of web pages, the website compromising:

a search page for a user submitting a query to the server for at least one product;

a results webpage transmitted to the user, the results page including links to an
independent third party website and a link to a play webpage of the website;

a play webpage providing a game of chance for winning the product corresponding to a
selected play link from the results webpage, wherein the probability of winning

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the product by the user is dynamically calculated based on one or more factors selected from a group consisting of: the cost of the selected product in relation to the total cost of all products available, a current prize budget, a ratio of the current prize budget to a total amount of funds received and the user's behavior during a user session; and

a product win webpage to displaying an outcome indicator indicating ~~indicate~~ a favorable outcome in said game of chance for said product, the outcome indicator independent of, and differently distributed from, the probability of winning.

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